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ABSTRACT

Error analysis has consistently neglected to give any treatment of the phonological aspects of non-native linguistic performance. Using Selinker's Interlanguage model as a starting-point, an attempt is made here to develop a descriptive apparatus capable of accounting for the phenomena of "foreign accents." The data of one such non-native variety of English ("Dutch-English") are re-examined with particular reference to prosodic and paralinguistic features. Rhythm, intonation and voice quality are taken to be the primary defining constituents of foreign accents and a preliminary analysis of these systems is offered within an interlingual frame of reference, drawing on the theoretical work of Crystal, Halliday, Laver and others. For each system, a notion of language-specific norms is developed, interlingual behavior resulting either from simple differences between them or from variant perception of the target-language norms by the foreign learner. Concrete examples of interlingual (or 'erroneous') behavior within each of the three systems, drawn from the performance of Dutch teacher-trainees, are then discussed and related to the overall descriptive framework. (Author)

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INTERLANGUAGE AND FOREIGN ACCENT.

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INTERLANGUAGE AND FOREIGN ACCENT.

1. Introduction.

The phenomenon of non-native phonology, familiar to the layman as "foreign accent", is an area which has been almost entirely neglected by error analysts working within an interlingual frame of reference. Indeed, in a recent paper, Corder, who has done perhaps more than any other individual to promote and encourage the study of learner-error, makes no more than a passing reference to phonological error, (v.Corder 1975), and in his opening address to the 1975 AILA Conference he implied that no interesting work remained to be done in this field. The purpose of this article is threefold: i) to suggest a central position for the study of non-native pronunciation as the most immediate hallmark of "foreignness"; ii) to re-examine those features and systems which together constitute foreign accent; and iii) to outline a number of areas where systematic interlingual investigation might prove to be enlightening. (I shall not, in this context, offer any possible reformulations of teaching objectives, since this would pre-suppose an adequate descriptive statement. It is perhaps worthwhile to observe, however, that'near-nativeness' figures prominently as an objective for pronunciation-teaching in most English language syllabuses in Western Europe, despite the obvious difficulties in attaining it in a large majority of cases.)

2. Foreign Accent.

This may be defined as the complex of interlingual or idiosyncratic phonological, prosodic and paralinguistic systems which characterize a speaker of a given language as non-native. Traditionally, phonological

has been equated with segmental, whilst prosodic and paratinguistic aspects have been comparatively neglected in pedagogic work. Here the core of the problem is to be found.

The view of pronunciation as a linear accumulation of relatively static phonemes (what Abercrombie, 1964a, calls the 'posture and glide' approach) has clouded the true issues and has persuaded generations of English language teachers that "foreign-sounding" pronunciation was due, wholly or mainly, to the imperfect learning of sound-segments.

On the other hand there has been, over the past decade or so, a growing interest among academic phoneticians in a wide range of other more concrete aspects of sound production that had hitherto been relatively neglected. Abercrombie (loc.cit.) writes of a'parametric' approach which would account for linguistic sound according to variation within the members of a small set of physiological activities.

He discusses, albeit briefly, the relevant activities of respiration, phonation and articulation, and goes on to suggest that perception of speech occurs within "three parameters representing three expressive systems:

i) articulatory patterns

ii) intonation patterns

iii) register ('voice quality') patterns."

Honikman (1964) describes pedagogic work carried out within a similar frame of reference, where students were encouraged to think of the articulatory parameter, or'setting', as varying between 'English gear' and 'French gear", with striking and immediate benefits to the authenticity of their pronunciation. Catford (1964, 9170) discusses and exemplifies different types of phonation, of which the perceptual correlates are different voice qualities, and this kind of approach is taken up by Laver (1972), who discusses the information content, in social and psychological terms, of variations within the phonatory and articulatory parameters.

If we compare this work with the still prevalent approach to pronunciation-teaching, we find that phonatory training (apart from the voice- non-voice contrast) is entirely neglected (except, perhaps, in the training of actors), and that articulatory training concentrates almost exclusively on static segments described in terms of the manner and place of their primary articulation. Any possible secondary articulations, along with significant generalisations about manner and place, such as articulatory locus,'language-specific rest-positions', degree of muscular effort, etc., go by default.

The results of this approach to pronunciation-teaching are familiar throughout the English-teaching world. The learner tends to equate the phonemes of his mother-tongue with those of English (as far as this is possible) and therefore speaks the foreign language with the same basic setting and phonation-type as he uses for the mother-tongue. No amount

of remedial activity, along the same segmental lines, will improve the situation. (for further discussion of this area v. Wadsworth, forthcoming.)

3. Constituents.

Clearly, however, there is more to "foreign accent" than its speech-segments, however we define them. In fact, it is my belief that these are relatively insignificant perceptually, since almost every non-native'allophone' is to be found in one or the other variety of native English. One should, therefore, look at other features and systems within the phonic substance of English and examine their relevance to interlingual analysis.

I propose, therefore, to place prosodic and paralinguistic features and systems first in order of importance. There are both practical and theoretical reasons for such a change of emphasis. On the practical side, the phonemic system has already received a considerable amount of attention from both the language-teacher and thepédagogically-oriented phonetician, without any very enlightening results. From a theoretical point of view there are sound reasons for placing prosodic and paralinguistic features at the deep structure level in a production-oriented model of speech, as being the permanent framework within which all else occurs. There is, furthermore, (cf. Laver 1970, Fromkin 1973) good reason to suppose that the tone-unit has some basic neurological status as the unit of pre-planning. Studies of slips and hesitations (in the performance ofnative speakers) show that decisions about tonality and tonicity are almost certainly taken at a deeper level (i.e. earlier) than decisions about the exact lexical content of utterances.

Crystal (1969) writes of a "phonetic residue of imperfectly learned prosodic features"(my italics), and suggests that this is:

> " .the final barrier to the mastery of a foreign language, by maintaining a stubborn accent on the one hand, and by obscuring the full range of attitudinal contrasts, on the other."

From the set of prosodic systems Crystal discusses one would intuitively select intonation, rhythmicality and tempo as being of obvious relevance to any analysis of non-native performance.

The bundle of features - tone, relative-pitch and pitch-range, loudness and duration - which together determine perceptual prominence in speech clearly do not combine or function in the same way in all languages. Regrettably, however, the available material for intonation training (e.g. Halliday, 1970) seems to imply that the differences are of slight importance, and that provided the (abstract) systems of tone, tonicity and tonality for English are learned, the problem will somehow vanish. Anyone familiar with the variety of English spoken in the Netherlands, or West Germany, for example, would agree, however, that the problem does not vanish, and that the non-native's perceptual mechanism, his 'pre-conditioning', is as important here as it is in the area of articulation.

The result of current pedagogic practice is that the systems employed by the non-native in speaking English bear small resemblance to those of native English, and the role of intonation as a conveyor of attitude, mood,etc., to say nothing of its contrastive grammatical function, is considerably diminished.

Much the same could be said of other prosodic systems, such as rhythm and tempo, or, at the level of discourse, key (cf. Brazil 1975), whose communicative import for native speakers has been described at length by Crystal (op.cit.), Albrow (1968) and in Bolinger (1972), to name but a few. Very little of this work has so far filtered through to the level of classroom practice.

4. The Investigation of Foreign Accents.

At this point I would like to offer, perhaps rather prematurely and speculatively, an interlingual outline of a particular type of foreign accent in accordance with the approach sketched above. By so doing I hope a) to demonstrate why I believe it to be representative of an interlingual state of affaris, and b) to highlight those areas where research would be profitable both to the classroom practitioner and to the theoretical analyst.

4.1. Interlanguage.

Following Selinker (1972) I take this term to refer to a "separate linguistic system based on the observable output which results from a learner's attempted production of a TL norm". This output, according to Selinker, is due to the existence of "latent psychological structures" which differ significantly from those of native-speakers of a given target-language and which are activated in actual performance.

The step from "latent psychological structures" to a notion of competence is small, and perhaps it would be as well to point out at this stage that I take interlanguage to be equivalent for all practical

purposes to Corder's transitional competence (v.Corder 1971) and Nemser's approximative system (v. Nemser 1971). In all these cases one is concerned with formulating a competence model in the light of available (deviant) performance.

Selinker goes on to say that an Interlanguage is characterized by fossilization. Here he refers to the performance phenomena regularly found in the IL's of speakers of a given mother-tongue, irrespective of age and learning experience. Some, but not all, fossilizable phenomena may be accounted for by simple contrastive analysis. The point Selinker stresses, however, is that the non-native speaker who 'backslides' under certain conditions, does so to an IL norm (rather than to the L1 norm), not all of which is predictable by contrastive means.

4.2. "Dutch-English".

Let us now consider the features of the interlanguage spoken by Dutch learners of English, and in particular some of its prosodic and paralinguistic aspects.

4.2.1. The Interlingual Nature of Dutch-English.

In the first place the phonological aspects of Dutch-English are taken to constitute a system separate from any native variety of English. Simple tests have shown that it is possible for a native speaker of English familiar with the variety to select it both from a set of native varieties and from a set of non-native varieties.

The characteristics which enable him to identify it are discussed below.

Secondly, it may be said to be interlingual since not all of its features are found in either English or Dutch - or at least not with the same distribution - and it may therefore be diagnosed as the result of learners' attempts to approximate to an L2 norm. (The role of the teaching model employed and the learners' perceptual norms are clearly a fundamental issue which space will not permit me to develop in this context. It seems, however, possible that the interlanguage is actually taught explicitly, as far as phonology is concerned, instead of being simply the result of learning processes.)

Thirdly, it is eminently fossilizable, this process occurring quite frequently at a very early stage in the learning process. This seems to be due to two main factors: a) to a particular type of teaching strategy which is not used in the teaching of other linguistic levels. (I refer to the practice of teaching the "phonemes" at the very beginning of the learning sequence and then not returning systematically to phonological training at any subsequent stage); and b) to what Selinker calls "strategies of second language communication". The need to speak, to form utterances, with the greatest emphasis lying on lexical and syntactic aspects, right from the start of the learning process, creates a state of 'stress' in the learner, to the detriment of the sounds he produces.

This early fossilization means a) that age and experience are largely irrelevant to the quality of the data, and b) that such data is readily available in convenient quantities and from a variety of sources. (i.e. not only from controlled situations such as the classroom or language laboratory, but also from television interviews, airport announcements and even casual encounters in the street.)

4.3. Characteristics.

The systems I wish to discuss first are rhythm and intonation. I shall then comment on other quasi-permanent features of the IL such as types of articulation and phonation, together with some discussion of their social and stereotypic connotations.

4.3.1. Rhythm.

The use of this term in linguistic descriptions is commonplace. The relevant data, however, remain a subject of considerable controversy. The common approach seems to be to classify languages as either stress-timed (i.e. characterized by recurrent strong syllables or stresses, which are perceptually isochronous, with a varying number of intervening weak syllables), or as syllable-timed (i.e. characterized by syllables of approximately equal length, linguistic stress being achieved by other strategies.)

Since both Dutch and English are generally accepted to be examples of the former category, we may legitimately concentrate exclusively on that, and ignore syllable-timing altogether.

There are two aspects of stress-timing which require discussion: a) the nature of isochrony, and b) the internal structure of the isochronous units.

4.3.1.1. Isochrony.

Whatever isochronous may mean linguistically, it is now clear that it is not supported as an absolute category by instrumental measurement. Knowles (1974) has shown that the upper and lower tolerance limits of

perceived isochrony are much farther apart than was previously supposed, and that towards the extremities great ambiguities can arise. In other words, if measurable stresses are too far apart, the native speaker may 'read in' a stress for which there is no acoustic support; and if they are too close together, a measurable stress may be 'overlooked'.

Secondly, he discovered that isochrony does not remain constant throughout a tone-unit. There is, in English at least, a tendency to accelerate up to the tonic syllable and to slow down after it.

Much work on upper and lower tolerance thresholds remains to be carried out, but we may tentatively agree with Crystal (1969,p.161) that isochrony is subjective, rather than absolute, and that the ear "reads in ... a rhythmic regularity .. where none objectively exists", but that the sustantive basis of stress within a language remains, for the present, obscure.

For our own purposes, however, it may well be possible, by relatively simple instrumental measurements, to determine the average distance between stresses (or average foot-length) within English and within Dutch, and to compare the two. What I would, subjectively, expect to find here is that the units in English are, on average, longer than the corresponding units in Dutch, in spite of the fact Dutch has a higher proportion of weak flexional syllables than English. From this one could move on to consider the difference in average syllable-length between the two languages and the relation this has to stressability.

The crucial test, however, is the IL norm, and it is here that instrumental evidence may be invoked to support the impression (again, subjective) that Dutchmen speaking English 'speak too fast', so that

the native-speaker, with a different 'timing-norm', fails to perceive certain intended stresses, not because they are not present, but because they come too close together in time. Even on those occasions where the converse is true (i.e. the Dutchman speaks too slowly, as is obviously the case with less fluent speakers) the principle still holds, since the II speaker still exceeds one tolerance threshold for English isochrony.

4.3.1.2. Internal Structure.

Abercrombie (1964b), in a discussion of the constituents of syllable-quantity in (native) English, suggests that quantity (or length) is not "directly dependent on a) vowel quantity or b) stress". He shows that vowel quantity is almost entirely relative and context-dependent, a 'long' vowel frequently having a shorter absolute duration than a 'short' vowel. Stress, as we have seen, is a complex phenomenon, and should be treated separately, and then rather as a relative organisational unit than as a phonetic absolute.

He then goes on to outline three basic categories of 2-syllable foot in English. The underlying principle is that the English foot has what, in musical terms, would be called 'triple time': the three different types of 2-syllable foot, therefore, may be subdivided in the proportions 1:2, 1½:1½, and 2:1. These we label, for convenience, types A, B and C.

Examples of type A (in RP) are /never/, /atom/, /shilling/. Type B is found in /centre/, /firmly/, and /greater/; and type C, where there must be a word-boundary between the two syllables, in /tea for/ two, a/gain to/morrow.

Knowles (loc.cit.) re-examines these possibilities and, although he finds considerable variations - depending mainly on location of the foot

within the larger context of the tone-unit - does tend to confirm by instrumental measurements Abercrombie's original auditory analysis. If one accepts triple-time in the spirit of the Viennese Waltz, therefore, (with an extendible second beat) one may take Abercrombie's classification as perceptually significant for English.

Dutch, on the other hand, appears to have a different structural basis. Clearly there are some feet in which a threefold division is made, but an analysis according to duple or quadruple seems, on the basis of auditory observation alone, to be more appropriate. At the very least there seems to be in Dutch a much higher proportion of feet which, if they occurred in English , would be classified as type B, whilst type A is relatively infrequent. (Compare Dutch /koffie/, which seems to be 1½:1½; and English /coffee/, which is 1:2.. The same may be said of /komen/ and /coming/, /moeder/ and /mother /, and so on. Furthermore, type C does not only occur in the presence of a word-boudary. (e.g. /machi/nist, /make/laar, and /tegen/stelling, all of which are 2:1, or perhaps even 3:1.

Certain of these features are also found in the IL of many speakers. (cf. the Dutch pronunciation of /almost/, /people/, /closing/, all of which are type C, or something very like it.) How significant these trends are can only be shown by further research, preferably supported by instrumental measurements. Provisionally, however, one can foresee communicative difficulty arising from the idiosyncratic use of type C feet, where a native interlocutor would intuitively 'read in' a word-boundary,

4.3.2. Intonation.

The norms in English intonation tend to be the curve and the glide,

with 'steps' or 'jumps' occurring as variants in certain phonetic contexts, such as in the presence of intervocalic voiceless plosives. (cf. //going// and //happen//, both uttered with low rising pitch.) Leveltone in English is exceptional, only being found with any frequency in, for instance, group recitations of prayers or station announcements of train routes.

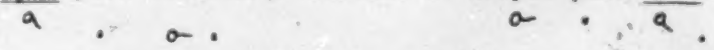
The norm in Dutch, on the other hand, appears to be a succession of horizontal (or slightly declining) straight lines, with relatively abrupt steps up or down between them. The only kind of glide found with any frequency is a final upglide, but even that is not functionally or distributionally the same as in English. (v. van Katwijk, 1974, for an experimentally-based analysis of prosodic phenomena in Dutch. Even here it is difficult to make direct comparison with English, since Dutch analysts have tended to define overall contours, rather than concentrate on tonic location and typology.)[1].

In addition, the maximum overall pitch-range appears to be narrower in Dutch than in English. Furthermore, although the tessitura for Dutch is higher than for English, the highest pitches used in English (for a hypothetical bi-lingual speaker) are actually higher than those found in Dutch. (This is partly, but not entirely, due to the use of the falsetto, which is more frequent than in Dutch. Attempts to persuade Dutch male students to use it when speaking English often cause considerable embarrassment.)

It is too early to specify in any detail the intonational characteristics of the IL, but again some preliminary observations, based on auditory judgment, may be made.

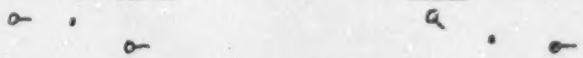
In the first place, the relative narrowness of pitch-span found in Dutch is also found in the IL, particularly that of men. (This in itself is interesting since in British English, especially in RP, men tend to have a wider overall pitch-span than women, owing to the use of the falsetto refered to above.) In actual realisations this means that in the IL a considerable proportion of tonic syllables have level tone both as a separate tone with functions of its own, and as an allotone of both rises and falls.

Secondly, the different perceptual norms obtaining between speakers of Dutch and speakers of English seem to cause Dutch speakers to mishear English tonicity (location of tonic), the tendency being to confuse it with the onset, or first stressed syllable of the head. (cf. Crystal, 1969, p.143, Brazil, 1975, p.11.) This leads to utterances such as // Hyde park corner//, (instead of //Hyde park corner //),



//strong as a man//, where the context required //strong as a man//,

and, conversely, //swimming pool// instead of //swimming pool//.



A third problem is that certain types of tone seem to be entirely absent from the IL of most speakers, notably the rise-fall, Halliday's tone 5 (cf.Halliday 1967, 1970), as in //wonderful idea//.

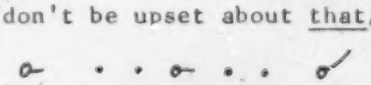
Whether this is due to a genuine perceptual difficulty or to mere shyness (this being one of the more 'extravagant' or emotive tones) is difficult to say, although I suspect the former, for reasons to be discussed below in connexion

with the pitch of weak syllables. This tone is normally rendered as a simple fall in the IL, often, but not always, with different tonicity. Thus //wonderful idea//, or // wonderful idea//.

The final area of interest in a discussion of the intonation of this IL is the pitch-potential of unstresred syllables, particularly of enclitics in the pre-tonic. In most varieties of native English these may behave as follows:

i) they may be at the same pitch as adjacent (preceding) stressed syllables. (This is found in the case of low heads, and also unmarked stepping heads:e.g.

//don't be upset about that//

 low head + low rise.

//why did you tell me you couldn't come//

stepping head + fall.

ii) they may be lowerin pitch than the preceding stress, but not at the same pitch as the ensuing stress: e.g.

//nobody's likely to notice//

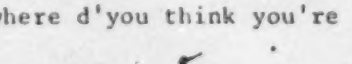
sliding head + fall-rise.

//everybody's bound to see it sometime//

sliding head + fall.

iii) a. they may be higher than the preceding stressed syllable, as part of an up-glide in a rising head: e.g.

// where d'you think you're going then//

 rising head + fall.

b..they may be higher than any adjacent stressed syllables, in emphatic rising and falling heads: e.g.

// what did you have to tell him for//

In the IL, the pitch of such weak syllables seems to depend entirely on the pitch of adjacent stresses. The weak syllable may, then, either remain at the same pitch as the preceding stress, or anticipate the pitch of the next-following stress. Intermediate or higher pitches are very rare. The conditions governing the choice between these alternatives are not yet fully clear, but there seems to be a close relationship to the rhythmic factors discussed above, and in particular the preponderance of type C feet. The perceptual correlate of this phenomenon is that the IL has none of the emphatic heads found in native varieties. This poses the additional problem of identifying how a speaker of the IL does achieve emphasis, if not through pitch-relations and contrasts.

To summarize this aspect, it would appear that the IL has a much smaller repertoire of pitch-based prosodic systems than native varieties, being restricted to two types of pre tonic (level and stepping) and three basictypes of tonic: rises, falls and levels. To a native speaker of English the rises and falls are different from his own in that they are narrowed, and also in that they tend to step rather than glide. The level tone is potentially ambiguous, functioning both as a (further) narrowed allotone of rises and falls, and also as an exponent of tonic with functions of its own. The perceptual correlate of this system, again from a native speaker's point of view, is that the IL speaker sounds 'dull ' or 'subdued', and also that in many instances his meaning may be far from clear.

4.3.3. Voice Quality and Articulation.

Under this heading I will outline briefly the parameters involved and offer some preliminary observations about features of the IL which seem to be paralinguistically important.

4.3.3.1. Voice Quality.

A discussion of phonatory possibilities involves a consideration of laryngeal settings. In the absence of radiographic evidence it is difficult to be precise about the physiological activities involved. One is, therefore, constrained to induce these activities from a study of the resultant sounds.

Laver (1972) subdivides laryngeal settings into three sub-categories:

i) phonation types

ii) pitch ranges (i.e.the relative overall range for an individual, compared to a norm)

iii) loudness ranges. (again, perindividual, compared to some norm.)

Clearly pitch-range and loudness range are of great importance in the stereotyping of individuals within a speech community. What the error analyst would be interested in, however, would be some comparison of the difference in norms between two speech communities, and its bearing on the IL. For instance, is a normal voice (in terms of pitch and loudness) the same in Dutch as in English, or is it higher or lower on a linear scale? In the absence of an empirical study one can do no more than remark that it would be interesting to know, since stereotyping of this sort is of obvious social and psychological importance in interactions.

In connexion with phonation types one may again speak of normal voice within a speech community, and here one is more immediately aware

of differences between the Dutch and English (or rather, British) speech communities. Observation of students (in the East and South of the Netherlands) would suggest that Dutch is spoken with the larynx higher than is normal in English. The English larynx, in normal voice, has either a neutral position, or a slight downward displacement.

Sound-production seems to take place in Dutch with the glottis in a state of tense open approximation, giving a basic quality which, when transfered to the IL, may be variously perceived by a native-speaker of English as 'gravelly', 'harsh' or 'whining', depending on the sex and physiologically determined pitch-range of the IL speaker. (For discussion of these and other subjective labels, v. Catford, 1964.)

I do not wish to assert that such differences are linguistically significant, either in an intra- or inter-lingual context, but they are certainly of sociolinguistic relevance, in the study of interactions between native and IL speakers.

4.3.3.2. Articulation .

Here, too, there is evidence that native speakers rely on perception of different types of articulation to draw conclusions about what Laver (1972) calls the indexical features of interlocutors, which include character, mood, state of health, etc. As with phonation types, there appears to be a theoretical norm for each speech community, but not necessarily between speech communities.

The study of an articulatory setting for a given language involves consideration of various activities of the supra-laryngeal vocal tract, such as longitudinal modifications (especially of the tongue), latitudinal modifications, degree of tension, and nasalization (or activity of the

velum).

Of English one may immediately say that the centre of gravity of the tongue is mid-to-forward, with the tip active; the pharynx is normally relaxed, allowing a relatively large phonetic space; and the velum is frequently lowered (in RP at least) allowing regularly secondary nasalization of vowels in the vicinity of a nasal consonant.

In Dutch it seems to be the case that the tongue is displaced backwards, with the tongue-tip less active, or active in a more lax way, and that the velum is lowered for much shorter periods than is the case for English. (Evidence for this is the regular elision of final nasal alveolars, and the frequent elision of intervocalic voiced alveolar plosives: thus /hɛbə/ for hebben; /bənedə/ (or even /bənea/) for beneden; /χujə/ for goede; and /rojə/ for rode.) Even those alveolar nasals which are retained have a shorter duration than similar segments in English. In addition there appears to be considerable pharyngeal tension (narrowing?) compared to English, with a corresponding diminution of phonetic space.

This type of setting, although normal in Dutch, gives the EL speaker a type of articulation which is felt by native speakers to be 'tense', 'throaty' and 'adenoidal'. (For instance, I find it very difficult to hear when a Dutchman has a cold, since the absence of nasal resonance is barely noticeable.) This is, of course, found in certain native varieties of English, but they tend to be those of relatively low prestige, such as the speech of Liverpool or Birmingham, or inappropriate in a European context, such as the speech of the white community in southern Africa. The sociolingustic implications of this, if it is general tendency, obviously merit further study.

5. Conclusions.

The approach outlined above would, if implemented in full, have a number of important consequences:

i) it would increase the applicability of the IL-model of error analysis by adding to it the long-neglected phonological dimension.

ii) it would help to extend the field of error analysis in the area of communicative error by examining in detail the phonic substance of actual communications and defining the range of possible interpretations that can be placed on a given utterance, in a given context, thereby contributing to an eventual definition of well-formedness in discourse.

iii) it would compel those concerned with the formulation of teaching objectives in various European countries to re-consider critically the label 'near-native' in view of, on the one hand, the difficulty of achieving this level at all in the vast majority of cases, and, on the other hand, - somewhat paradoxically - the communicative difficulties that can beset the IL speaker who sounds too much like a native.

We tend to think of foreign accents as intrinsically bad or undesirable: indeed, the only book I know of in this area (Chreist 1964) views them as a 'speech defect'! Perhaps, if we cannot eliminate them - and it is too early to say, since we have not gone about it systematically, - then we should actually encourage their retention as important indexical information.

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Nijmegen. March 1976.

Note.

1. (p.11) For further exemplification of this approach the reader is referred to : i) Collier, R. and 't Hart, J., "Basic Patterns in Dutch Intonation", and Cohen, A. and 't Hart, J., "Comparisons of Dutch and English Intonation Contours in Spoken News Bulletins", both in IPO Annual Progress Report,5, 1970;

ii) Collier and 't Hart, "A Grammar of Pitch Movements in Dutch Intonation", in IPO Annual Progress Report,6, 1971;

iii) van Katwijk, A., "The Composition of Pitch Contours in Dutch Utterances", in IPO Annual Progress Report, 5, 1970;

iv) Collier, R., "Intonational Tolerance", in IRAL, XIII/4, November 1975.

The immense scientific importance of this work on Dutch does not diminish the fact that it has little direct bearing on foreign language learning. Indeed, that was not the intention. One of the main tenets of IL analysis is that language transfer (cf. Selinker 1972) is only one of a number of processes underlying deviant performance. It may well be that, in the phonological dimension, most of the IL features and systems are indeed due to language transfer. That does not alter the empirical principle that we ought to examine and describe the IL data systematically before we seek explanations, either in L1 phenomena or elsewhere. To predict in the light of perceptual pre-conditioning is only part of the process, since we must also account for a modification in that preconditioning in the light of several years' exposure to L2 data.

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